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Evaluation of Custodial Staff Members

by
Roseanne Donnelly

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 1, 2003

Approved by

Professor

Date Approved

April 30, 2003

Abstract

Roseanne Donnelly

Evaluation of Custodial Staff
2003
Dr. Robert Kern
School Business Administration

This study of custodial evaluation forms was conducted to develop or revise the current form being used in the Mt. Holly School District. Requests for information from surrounding school districts were used to find what similar-sized schools were using and whether they were effective. The sample included eleven school districts in Burlington County, New Jersey. The requests were faxed to the selected school districts requesting they fax back a copy of their current custodial evaluation methods and any written procedures. Interviews were also chosen to get the staff's perspective. The sample included five custodians, the Business Administrator, and the Facilities Supervisor at Mt. Holly School District. The interview process was designed to be brief and informal. It took place during regular business hours so no one would be inconvenienced. Certain important aspects were taken from the evaluation forms received from the participants in the study, the answers to the interview questions, and the literature review. The development of goals and the achievement of those goals and communication are two important aspects that were missing from the Mt. Holly School District's evaluation form. The study also suggested that more communication is needed between administration and the custodial staff.

Mini-Abstract

Roseanne Donnelly

Evaluation Custodial Staff

2003

Dr. Robert Kern

School Business Administration

The purpose of this study was to develop evaluation procedures for the custodial staff at the Mt. Holly School District by interviewing administrators and the custodial staff and gathering current methods from surrounding school districts. The study suggested that communication and developing goals needed to be included in the evaluation procedures.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my field mentor and university mentor at Rowan University for their valuable feedback and encouragement. My grateful thanks go to my superiors at Amerihealth for the support and time they provided me during this entire process. Thanks to my family for their patience and kindness when I needed it the most and a special thanks to my fiancée who stood by me through it all.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Focus of the Study

Aging buildings, school violence, privatization, safety and health concerns are just some of the forces having an impact on school custodians today. It is the responsibility of the custodians to keep schools clean and safe, keep school grounds attractive and maintain a comfortable climate. Therefore, it is important for all school administrators to define the custodians' role as significant contributors to the entire operation of a school. An effective performance evaluation can encourage helpful staff relations through mutual trust and respect.

Custodial services in schools have evolved significantly in the past forty years. In the 1960's, the tools that were used were mops, brooms and disinfectant. They prepared the building for daily operation and did whatever else needed to be done. They had no job description or formal training. As the 1970's and 1980's approached, drug use in schools, diseases such as aids and other health hazards were issues that custodians were ill equipped to handle (Petersen 2002). Today, custodians need education and training in order to run a school building. In some of the nation's cleanest public schools, training is key to having an effective custodial workforce (Petersen 2002). An effective performance evaluation should include a plan for training and development. Specifying specific goals not only help the employee but the entire school district.

The intern will gather evaluation procedures from surrounding districts and review them. The intern will also interview the custodial staff members in order to gain information on what evaluation procedures are currently in use and how they would like to see them change. The intern will seek input from custodial staff, secretaries, administrators, teachers and proven research techniques in developing a revised evaluation plan. The intern will create new or revise old performance evaluation procedures with the intent of implementing them in the district based on the most effective evaluation format per the literature. These procedures will improve the existing methods along with improving the job performance of the custodial staff.

Purpose of the Study

The intern wants to develop evaluation procedures for the custodial staff at the Mount Holly School District by gathering current methods from surrounding school districts and interviewing the custodial staff members. This will not only improve the existing evaluation process, but also encourage the custodial staff to participate in the evaluation of their own performance to help in self-improvement. The project will result in newly refined evaluation procedures that will be implemented to strengthen the process and improve the job performance of the custodians.

Limitations

The study will be conducted between September 2002 and March 2003 and the core of the study will be limited to gathering custodian evaluation data. The size and location of the samples selected will also limit the study. The intern will interview the director of facilities at the Mount Holly School district in Burlington County, New Jersey. The intern will also contact only those Business Administrators in surrounding school districts in

Burlington County that are similar in size (pre-K-8) to Mount Holly School District in order to obtain information on their current evaluation methods.

Setting of the Study

This project will take place in Mount Holly, Burlington County, New Jersey. Mount Holly Township's population is 10,728, which includes 37% renters. The Township of Mount Holly is located in the southern section of the State of New Jersey, in the County of Burlington and has a radius of two square miles. The town's median household income is \$43,284 and median home value is \$98,200, which is the lowest in the county. The U.S. Bureau of the Census reports that a total of 942 Hispanic (8.8% of the resident population) and 147 Asian (1.4% respectively) reside in the town. The poverty rate is 6.8%, which is the 4th highest in the county. The unemployment rate for Burlington County is 3.2% and Mount Holly experiences an unemployment rate of 5.2%, the 4th highest in the county. The town has had a steady decrease in its tax base due to 28% of the township's taxable property being owned by non-profit organizations and/or state owned facilities.

The district is made up of four schools: two elementary schools and one middle school comprising of approximately 1,200 students and one administrative building which provides rental space to the Burlington County Headstart Program. As the county seat, Mount Holly experiences a very transient student population, which brings with it the cost of educating a high percentage of educationally handicapped students. The district possesses a DFG (District Factor Group) rating of "B" and is designated as an At-Risk-District by the State of New Jersey based upon the high percentage of students eligible free and reduced lunch (60%). As a result, it qualifies for additional funding through

ECPA (Early Childhood Program Aid) and DEPA (Demonstrably Effective Program Aid). This additional funding is incorporated in the district's total operating budget of approximately \$15 million.

The Mount Holly Board of Education has a five-member board and expired terms are elected at the annual election, the third week in April. The board of education is comprised of four men and one female. Forty percent of the board members have backgrounds in the education profession. The aggregate number of board member experience and service is 57 years.

Significance of the Study

This project will be an important contribution to decision-making and communication between administration and the custodial staff at Mount Holly School District. The results of this project will not only have an impact on the Mount Holly School District but the surrounding school districts as well. An effective performance evaluation can develop a clearer understanding of the needs of a school district and in turn bring motivation and enthusiasm to the job. In addition, improved performance by the custodians will bring improved services to the students and staff and cleanliness and safety to the school plant.

Custodians must not only maintain the facility but must also safeguard the students and personnel using the facility from possible harmful pollutants that may be contained in an aging school building. Over the past several years, new safety and environmental regulations have been mandated by the state along with required training. A proper evaluation should reflect these changes and hold the employee accountable to compliance.

Organization of the Study

The remainder of this study will be organized into three remaining chapters. Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature. The literature discusses the most effective type of evaluation and rating format. Chapter 3 addresses five areas related to the research design used for the study. These include a general description of the design of the research, a description of the development and design of the research instruments actually used in the study, a description of the sample and sampling technique used in the study, a description of how the surveys and interviews were used, and a description of the data analysis plan. Chapter 4 presents the research findings and what it all means. Chapter 5 discusses the conclusions, implications and further study if needed.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Custodians are essential school employees who interact with students, teachers, parents and the community in their daily job function. They are often in a position to observe student behavior and spot potential problem settings where there are no teachers. They are an integral part of the education infrastructure and should not be ignored. Of the 5.3 million people that worked in U.S. schools in 1997, 1.5 million of them provided services such as driving buses, preparing food and cleaning schools.

A report by the Washington-based Institute for Educational Leadership Johnston (2001) concluded that the link between school achievement and “central office workers” is an “untapped resource” to reforming schools. Long Beach, California school board studied the central office using strategies from the Baldrige National Quality Program. They conducted customer-satisfaction surveys of teachers and other school employees. They found this to be an important tool in opening up lines of communication.

In a recent survey conducted jointly by the Society for Human Resource Management and Personnel Decision International 32% of human resource professionals surveyed indicated that they were “unsatisfied” or “very unsatisfied” with their organizations’ performance management systems. Fred Nickols, a senior consultant with The Distance Consulting Company in Robbinsville, New Jersey says that the performance appraisal rests on four basic principles: goals should be set and agreed upon by both the manager and the employee, metrics for measuring the employee’s success in meeting those goals

should be clearly articulated, the goals themselves should be flexible enough to reflect changing conditions in the economy and the workplace and employees should be able to think of their managers as coaches who are there not to pass judgment, but to help them achieve success (Fandray 2001).

The intern believes that improving the evaluation procedures at Mt. Holly Schools, the job performance of the custodial staff will also improve. A complete evaluation begins with a job description that accurately describes the current job function and the responsibilities of the position. For those custodial and maintenance staff members that have a job description, 54% feel it does not accurately describe the amount of work they do, 23% think it is inaccurate and 56% do not have a say in it (National Education Association, n.d.). Job descriptions clarify who is responsible for certain tasks and helps the employee understand the specific responsibilities of the position. Evaluations build a record for performance of duties outlined in the job description. It also confirms skills and strengths the employee brings to the job.

Another important aspect to be included in an effective performance appraisal is training. Specifying particular goals and plans for improvement help the employee and employer. Training is often omitted in performance evaluations because it takes time and money to support it. However, without this key ingredient, turnover and increased accidents due to lack of education will cost the employer a heavy price in the end. Training can make a difference in the budget bottom line. Well-trained custodians can help save utility and energy dollars, trash removal dollars, and custodial supply dollars (Petersen 2002).

There is a significant amount of literature that supports that communication is one objective to an effective performance appraisal. “A successful performance appraisal process involves explaining the job, communicating expectations, observing and documenting behavior and providing frequent informal feedback” (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.). In his article about selecting a performance appraisal technique, Buford (1989) suggests that managers should create an environment that encourages the employee to talk. Mutual respect and a common ground of understanding are important. Buford states, “Active listening and structuring the organizational and personal environment in ways that are conducive to effective communication can facilitate participation of subordinates”. It is the administrators’ responsibility to soothe the apprehension the employee may feel about the performance appraisal process. The performance appraisal can be a tool to be used for administrators and managers to open lines of dialogue that once may have been closed. The University of Arizona’s Classified Employee Performance Evaluation manual (SPP 309-01 – revised 7/2001) states that evaluations are to “encourage communication between the employee and the supervisor...” An evaluation objective stated by the National Education Association is “to ensure communication between supervisor and employee about job expectations and performance”. “Performance appraisals promote an ongoing dialogue and review and help to eradicate non-productive misunderstandings” (Silver 1982).

Setting up a performance appraisal process means setting standards to be applied. This means defining specific measures of specific tasks and establishing a rating scale, which reflect differences in productivity. Performance appraisals should be formed based on the goals of the school district and the expectations of the particular job. “The

immediate supervisor should plan for a performance evaluation by developing and communicating, in writing, specific predetermined standards of performance related to the duties and responsibilities of the employee's position" (Arizona State University, 2001). There are four basic approaches to measuring the effectiveness of performance; point rating, comparison, job classification and ranking (Swan, Holmes, Brown, Short and DeWeese 1986). Arizona State University defines performance evaluation ratings as "level one – responsibilities of position not fulfilled, level two – responsibilities of position fulfilled and level three – responsibilities of position exceeded". The University of Oregon (2001) splits their performance appraisal for classified employees in half. The first half references duties. Each job duty is rated based on understanding and mastery, highly competent, competent, needs improvement and unsatisfactory performance. The second half is behavioral factors. Each behavioral factor is based on attendance, dependability, customer service, productivity, cooperation and safety. The custodial staff members at the Boston Public Schools are evaluated on standards that include unsatisfactory (the employee fails to meet the job description and needs improvement), satisfactory (the employee meets the job description), good (the employee meets and/or generally exceeds the standards) and excellent (the employee exceeds standards) (Boston Public Schools, 2001). When the employee is in need of improvement, a written narrative to fix the problem is submitted. At San Francisco Unified School District (1997), the custodial services building evaluation contains five parts: general area, classrooms, restrooms, cafeteria and miscellaneous. Within each part, specific tasks are listed such as windows cleaned, floor clean and waxed, light fixtures and fire extinguishers are in good

working condition. Each task is based on a numerical system of one through five. A total of one hundred points is an excellent evaluation.

Many performance appraisals are completed annually. However, the administrators must follow up and continually be involved with the employee's job performance in order to be aware of their productivity. Feedback should be provided to the employee on a regular basis. A change in productivity, Blai (1983) suggests, should be identified, "constantly reinforced, and made known to the employee in a constructive manner". At Bristol-Myers Squibb, doing performance appraisals was no easy task. They employ 44,000 people throughout the world. In the past, the focus was on what an employee had already done, rather than on future expectations, goals and growth (Wiscombe, 2001). Rather than conducting annual reviews, the company started with on-going appraisals. The company saved money and the employee could get immediate feedback. Appraisals that are more frequent are essential to focus on-going attention to production.

Chapter 3

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to develop new or revise old evaluation procedures for the custodial staff members at Mount Holly School District. This study will be an important contribution in developing a clearer understanding of the needs of the school district and in turn bring motivation and enthusiasm to the job. The results of this project will be instrumental in updating and improving the district's methodology in the evaluation process of the maintenance personnel. If evaluation tools are not being reviewed and revised on a regular basis, it provides a disadvantage to not only the employee but also the entire school district.

General Description of the Research Design

This project was designed for use as a tool by Mt. Holly School District in revising and developing evaluation procedures for their custodial staff. This project incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. The methods the intern chose to utilize were a request for information and interviews. A request for information was chosen in order to find out whether the surrounding school districts' process was effective and if so what characteristics did it include that made it effective. How did they define success or failure? Were goals of the school clearly defined in the evaluation method and if so how? Were they using rating scales? These questions could best be answered by the utilization of a request for information. This information would be helpful in developing a complete evaluation form.

The intern also chose to interview the custodian/maintenance staff, the facilities supervisor as well as an administrator at Mt. Holly School District. Interviews were chosen in order to get the staff's perspective. The interview process allowed the intern to establish a relaxed and informal relationship with the interviewees. As a result, they felt free to express their likes and dislikes.

Development and Design of Research Instruments

The research instruments that were used were interviews of the custodial staff at Mount Holly School District and a request for information from the surrounding school districts. Requests were used in order to find out what other school districts were incorporating in their methods that make it work. The interview process was designed to be brief and informal. It took place during regular business hours so no one would be inconvenienced. The questions were semi-structured which allowed for individual responses. The questions asked of the custodial staff members were designed to focus on their viewpoint of the evaluation process and their job description. The questions asked of the administrators focused more on their perception of the custodians' job and whether they believed the evaluation process could be improved and if so how. Designing the questions this way allowed all perspectives to be incorporated into the development of an effective evaluation tool.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The samples identified in this project consisted of the custodial/maintenance staff members, facilities supervisor and one administrator at Mt. Holly School District as well

as the surrounding K-8 school districts, similar in size, located in Burlington County. It was important to collect data from districts similar in size and location so that the information would be relevant to the Mount Holly School District. Therefore, out of forty-two districts located in Burlington County, eleven were faxed a request for information. The eleven school districts are located within a thirty-mile radius of Mount Holly.

Due to the time constraints and willingness of the staff members to participate the intern randomly selected five from the seventeen custodial employees and the facilities supervisor to interview. The intern realizes this is not representative of all custodian/maintenance workers. However, they do give some insight into how the Mt. Holly School District is handling their evaluations.

For purposes of anonymity, the custodians interviewed will be identified as Custodian 1, Custodian 2, Custodian 3, Custodian 4, and Custodian 5. They range in age from twenty-nine to sixty-three years. They all work full time, are union members and live within a 10-mile radius of the school. Custodian 2 is a female and the remainder are males. Custodian 3 has been employed in the district since 1963 and Custodian 1 since 1995. The others average three years of employment with Mount Holly.

Data Collection Approach

The request for information was faxed to the selected school districts requesting they fax back a copy of their current custodial evaluation methods and any written procedures within days. A follow-up fax will be sent to those districts that have not responded. The goal is to receive as many responses as possible to assess and evaluate the data. Informal

interviews were conducted with custodial/maintenance staff members as well as administrators.

Data Analysis Plan

In order to develop an effective, useful instrument for the Mt. Holly School District, the data must show how success or failure of a performance evaluation is defined and how the process clearly defines goals and needs of the district. Data collected throughout this project will be used to determine if the present evaluation procedures at Mount Holly School District need to be revised or reformed. The evaluation procedures gathered from the surrounding school districts will be used along with the interview information to determine patterns and solutions.

The literature review suggested there are four basic approaches to measuring the effectiveness of performance: point rating, comparison, job classification and ranking. The data collected from each of the districts highlighted these approaches in a narrative format. The data will be organized by facility category, such as classroom, lavatory, floors, offices as well as the use and range of rating systems. In order to develop an effective appraisal format, the intern included a model format (see Appendix A). This model generally reflects the characteristics of an effective performance appraisal per the literature review. The attached model includes a method of measuring the performance of the employee, a list of tasks that describe the function and responsibilities of the position and space provided for comment. The data collected from the surrounding districts were compared and contrasted to this model in order to modify it to fit Mount Holly School District's needs.

The literature review also stressed the importance of mutual respect and a common ground of understanding. An evaluation objective stated by the National Educational Association is “to ensure communication between supervisor and employee about job expectations and performance”. The information gathered from the interviews were reviewed and analyzed to align it with the literature review. The data collected through the interview process were transcribed and color-coded based on similarity.

Chapter 4

Presentation of Research Findings

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to develop an evaluation tool for assessing the performance of the custodial staff in the Mt. Holly School District. The current form is reported to be out-of-date and ineffective by the School Business Administrator. By comparing and contrasting the evaluation forms received from the participating school districts to the model, analyzing the data collected from the interviews and the literature review, an effective appraisal form was developed for the Mt. Holly School District.

Results

The following are the results of the questions that were investigated to gain further knowledge in the development of an effective evaluation tool for the Mt. Holly School District.

What is the current process in place to evaluate custodial staff members in the surrounding districts and how does the administration in these districts measure success or effectiveness of the current process? Six responses to the request for information were returned from the surrounding school districts out of the eleven that were surveyed. One school district forwarded a note stating they do not have a custodial evaluation form. Another district forwarded a teacher's evaluation form stating that they do not have a formal custodial evaluation form so they frame one around the teachers' form. The intern

was left with four evaluation forms to review. These districts will be referred to as District A, District B, District C, and District D.

An important aspect in setting up a performance appraisal is defining specific measures of specific tasks and establishing a rating scale that reflects differences in productivity. The attached model, Appendix A, generally reflects the characteristics of an effective performance appraisal per the literature review. One feature of the model is a method of measuring the performance of the employee. The evaluation indicators varied among the four school districts included in this study. District A listed each specific job task and responsibility and rated the employee on a scale of commendable, satisfactory, areas to address, and unsatisfactory. District B evaluated behavioral factors such as possesses knowledge of work, follows directions, and communicates effectively and their custodian and maintenance staff is rated based on a scale of excellent, satisfactory, improvement needed, and unsatisfactory. District C measured their custodial staff by satisfactory, needs improvement, and not applicable. They divide their form into three parts: personal, work program, and relationship with others. District D also rates their employee on behavioral factors although specific job tasks are not listed. Each rating scale is defined within each division. For example, if the employee was rated an “excellent” under the division labeled “ability to deal with people outside immediate group,” excellent would be defined, as “has an unusual knack for successfully dealing diplomatically with complaints and in getting the cooperation of others”. However, if the employee was rated “excellent” under the division labeled “knowledge required for the job”, he/she is “exceptionally well informed and knowledge and skill exceed position requirements”.

Who is responsible for evaluating the custodial staff, how long has the process been in place, and how many times are they evaluated? District C hired a supervisor of buildings and grounds in March 2002. He is responsible for doing the evaluations under the direction of the Business Administrator. The Business Administrator reviews the evaluations and places them in the employee files. According to their contract, support staff have to receive an evaluation by March 31 each year, however, the buildings and grounds supervisor prefers to do at least two or three during the year depending upon the circumstances of the employee. Similarly, in District A, the supervisor of buildings and grounds evaluates the custodians annually. The current appraisal form has been in use for six years. The Facilities Manager from District B developed their evaluation form when he was hired three years ago. He also is responsible for evaluating the custodians annually. The evaluation procedures at District D have been used for five years. The Facilities Director evaluates the custodial staff once a year and under his direction are inspected by a lead custodian quarterly.

How does the process clearly define goals and/or needs of the district? One of the four basic principles that a performance appraisal is based, per Fred Nickols of the Distance Consulting Company, is that goals should be set and agreed upon by both manager and employee and metrics for measuring the employee's success in meeting those goals should be clearly articulated. (Fandray 2001) Developing goals for the employee and describing how they will be achieved during the next evaluation period, a third characteristic of the model, was not included on any of the forms received from the four school districts. However, Districts A, B and D incorporated a quality assurance form as part of their appraisal process. This form provides the evaluator with space to

comment on strengths and weaknesses in the employee's job performance and to make suggestions for improvement. District C provides a space labeled only as "comments". Districts B and D took the quality assurance form a step further by allowing the employee to agree, disagree, or comment on his/her own evaluation.

Along with requests for information, interviews were conducted with the Business Administrator, the Facilities Supervisor and members of the custodial staff at Mt. Holly School District. When asked if the evaluation process helps them in the performance of their job, three out of five custodians answered no. They think it is a "waste of time" and "not useful". When asked if they would like to see the process change, the same three staff members answered yes. Custodian 1 said, "they should get rid of it and address problems as they come up." Custodian 2 would like "to have more say in what is being done." "You never get a pat on the back," said Custodian 5. "They pick out the bad things and not the good." The custodial staff members were asked if they felt free to communicate problems, work or personal, when they encountered them. Two out of five custodians answered yes. However, Custodian 2 said; "I'm not sure who to go to. I know the supervisor and business administrator are the boss but now we have [Custodian 1]. We're not sure what he does and it's not spelled out, but he gets in the middle of everything." Custodian 5 said he goes to "the union rep" if he has a problem, not the supervisor. Custodian 3 remarked that he would "never bring up problems, just deal with them yourself."

A complete evaluation begins with a job description that accurately describes the current job function and the responsibilities of the position. All of the custodians agreed their job descriptions did not accurately portray what they do on a daily basis. They

believe they do more. Moreover, they are clear about what is expected of them. However, Custodian 1 said the facilities supervisor, “appointed” him assistant supervisor, “without the job description and without the pay.” This has caused problems between the Facilities Supervisor and the Business Administrator and friction between Custodian 1 and his co-workers.

“A successful performance appraisal process involves explaining the job, communicating expectations, observing and documenting behavior and providing frequent informal feedback.” (U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.) The Mt. Holly Business Administrator agrees: “the custodian evaluations need to be revised and or consolidated to be customized to each area (day, night, central) with their job responsibilities along with attendance, judgment, initiative issues being addressed and comments for recommendations and commendations. The evaluation tool is very important to provide feedback to the staff.” However, when asked if they ever disagreed with an evaluation, four out of five custodians said they have not agreed but nothing was ever resolved. “We tell them we disagree, they tell us to sign it and that’s as far as it goes.” Custodian 1 commented that when he told the previous Facilities Supervisor he disagreed with his evaluation, the supervisor told him, “I have to find something wrong.” Custodian 4 never disagreed with his evaluation. “It points out things that I forget. Daytime is different than night. At night, you could get a robot to do it. During the day, it can get so hectic around here and it’s easy to forget to dust here or clean there. The evaluation points that stuff out.”

In the literature review, Peterson (2002) stated that, “well trained custodians can help save utility and energy dollars, trash removal dollars and custodian supply dollars.”

Surprisingly, all five staff members said there was no orientation procedure when they got hired or any talk of training during the evaluation process. “They throw you right into it.” Custodian 4 said that another custodian “showed me the ropes. My dad and brother worked here so I’ve known what to do since I was 10.” The supervisor conducts the required Right to Know training but nothing beyond that is held. Custodian 1 said he would “like to see more training just before summer when the main cleaning time is.”

What effect does the evaluation process have on the staff members’ job performance? The Facilities Supervisor at Mt. Holly School District believes that the current appraisal process is effective. “I do regular inspections of the cleaning of the crew. I will write down any items I feel are in need of improvement. They sign the evaluation form and understand these items must be rectified. Improvement normally follows.” The Business Administrator disagrees. “The existing method of evaluating support staff in the district has been to maintain the status quo in the utilization of antiquated forms and procedures. Safety and environmental regulations along with required training should be reflected in the evaluation instrument.”

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to develop evaluation procedures for the custodial staff at the Mount Holly School District by interviewing administrators and the custodial staff and gathering current methods from surrounding school districts. In order to improve the existing evaluation process, certain important aspects were taken from the evaluation forms received from the participants in the study, the answers to the interview questions, and the literature review.

Conclusions, Implications

A listing of both job responsibilities and behavioral factors and a rating scale were included in Mt. Holly School District's appraisal form. These characteristics are consistent with the literature review. Spelling out specific job performance requirements and specifying desired employee behavior help improve the employee work performance (Boris 1983). The current evaluation form applied by the Mt. Holly School District lists factors such as general cleaning, knowledge, quantity and quality of work, adaptability, attitude, initiative, responsibility, punctuality, attendance, safety, proper attire and teamwork along with each specific job task. The employees are rated based on proficient, acceptable, needs improvement, and not applicable.

The development of goals and the achievement of those goals and communication are two important aspects that were missing from the Mt. Holly School District's evaluation

form. The model (Appendix A) includes a section labeled "Employee Development". It is divided into two components. The first is designed to identify and evaluate the results of the employee development experiences during the last appraisal period. The second component provides the evaluator space to identify development goals for the employee and explain how they will be achieved during the next evaluation period. One of the principles that a successful performance appraisal is based is that manager and employee should agree upon goals and strategies for successfully completing these goals should be clearly articulated. (Fandray 2001) The quality assurance form attached to three of the participating school district's evaluation forms accomplished the same goal. It allowed the evaluator to comment on strengths and weaknesses in job performance and suggested ways to improve.

The study also suggests that there is a need in the Mt. Holly School District for more communication between administration and the custodial staff. It was apparent from the answers to the question of whether the appraisal process helps them in their job that the majority of the custodians did not see a reason for the process and thought it a waste of time. This was apparent with one custodian remarking that when he has a problem (work or personal) he talks with his union representative rather than his supervisor. The literature clearly stated, "Managers should create an environment that encourages the employee to talk. Mutual respect and a common ground of understanding are important". (Buford 1989) The performance appraisal can be a tool to be used for administrators and managers to open lines of dialogue that once may have been closed. (Arizona University 2001)

Taking all of this into consideration, Appendix B is the modified evaluation instrument for the Mt. Holly School District. The list of job tasks and behavioral factors remained the same. However, a section labeled “Employee Development” was added. This feature provides both employer and employee the opportunity to listen and communicate effectively. Remedies should be explained and clarified so that there are no misunderstandings. The monthly, random area inspections Mt. Holly School District currently conducts should continue but more frequent, formal evaluations should be put in place in order to offer feedback on a regular basis. Although the custodial contract says annual evaluations should be performed, the intern recommends quarterly performance evaluations. The rating scale was also changed in order for the feedback to be more meaningful to the employee. Defining specific measures of specific tasks and establishing a rating scale that reflects differences in productivity is an important step in setting up a performance appraisal process. “Satisfactory” and “unsatisfactory” were added and “acceptable” and “not applicable” were eliminated. This instrument, once approved by the Business Administrator and the Board of Education, will be implemented in the district starting the school year 2003–2004.

Further Study

Further studies should be conducted to analyze the affect of the modified evaluation instrument on job performance and motivation of the staff. Performance appraisals should be formed based on the goals of the school district; therefore, the current job descriptions Mt. Holly School District uses should be reviewed annually so that it reflects changing conditions within the school and to determine the accuracy of the job functions.

Additional interviews should also be conducted with custodial staff members from Mt. Holly School District as well as surrounding districts to examine communication issues. Also, recommendations to improve performance in the new evaluations require the administration to provide adequate training so employees have the fair opportunity to improve their performance.

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Appendix A
Model Performance Appraisal

Classified Performance Appraisal

Employee Name:

University ID:

Department:

Position Number:

Classification Number:

Title:

Evaluation Type:

Reporting Period (From/To):

If you would like a copy of this report e-mailed to you for archival purposes, please enter your e-mail address below. Otherwise, leave blank.

Your E-mail Address:

Duties

Duty #1

Name of Duty:

Percent of Job:

Essential Function?

- ☐ Exhibits understanding and mastery; needs minimal supervision. Exercises good judgment in dealing with non-routine work situations.
- ☐ Performance is highly competent; working toward mastery. Needs direction only in non-routine work situations.
- ☐ Competent performance. Needs occasional supervision on some routine aspects of this job function.
- ☐ Needs improvement. Requires continuing supervision to complete routine tasks in this job function.
- ☐ Unsatisfactory performance (Narrative comment required - give examples).
- ☐ Other (please specify below).

Narrative Comments:

Duty #2

Name of Duty:

Percent of Job:

Essential Function? ☐

- ☐ Exhibits understanding and mastery; needs minimal supervision. Exercises good judgment in dealing with non-routine work situations.
- ☐ Performance is highly competent; working toward mastery. Needs direction only in non-routine work situations.
- ☐ Competent performance. Needs occasional supervision on some routine aspects of this job function.
- ☐ Needs improvement. Requires continuing supervision to complete routine tasks in this job function.
- ☐ Unsatisfactory performance (Narrative comment required - give examples).
- ☐ Other (please specify below).

Narrative Comments:

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Duty #3

Name of Duty:

Percent of Job:

Essential Function? ☐

- ☐ Exhibits understanding and mastery; needs minimal supervision. Exercises good judgment in dealing with non-routine work situations.
- ☐ Performance is highly competent; working toward mastery. Needs direction only in non-routine work situations.
- ☐ Competent performance. Needs occasional supervision on some routine aspects of this job function.
- ☐ Needs improvement. Requires continuing supervision to complete routine tasks in this job function.
- ☐ Unsatisfactory performance (Narrative comment required - give examples).
- ☐ Other (please specify below).

Narrative Comments:

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Duty #4

Name of Duty:

Percent of Job:

Essential Function? ☐

- ☐ Exhibits understanding and mastery; needs minimal supervision. Exercises good judgment in dealing with non-routine work situations.
- ☐ Performance is highly competent; working toward mastery. Needs direction only in non-routine work situations.
- ☐ Competent performance. Needs occasional supervision on some routine aspects of this job function.
- ☐ Needs improvement. Requires continuing supervision to complete routine tasks in this job function.
- ☐ Unsatisfactory performance (Narrative comment required - give examples).
- ☐ Other (please specify below).

Narrative Comments:

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Behavioral Factors

Attendance

Consider absences, times arriving late, length of lunchbreaks and use of leave time.

- ☐ Arrives on time and begins work promptly. Pre-arranges time-off with appropriate notice; does not extend breaks or lunches.
- ☐ Occasionally absent, late or leaves early without appropriate notice.
- ☐ Problems with attendance, punctuality or misuse of leave time (Narrative comment required - give examples).
- ☐ Other (please specify below).

Narrative Comments:

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Dependability

Consider degree of supervision required and ability to follow instructions and complete tasks.

- ☐ Anticipates and prioritizes work, clarifying directions and timelines. Tracks and completes tasks in a timely manner, without reminder.
- ☐ Tracks and completes assigned work independently after initial instruction and feedback.
- ☐ Requires only occasional supervision to adhere to goals and timelines.
- ☐ Needs frequent supervision or reorientation on job goals, timelines or procedures.
- ☐ Needs constant supervision in order to produce adequate work (Narrative comment required - give examples).
- ☐ Other (please specify below).

Narrative Comments:

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Customer Service

Consider attitude, helpfulness, knowledge and communication skills towards those the University and department serves.

- ☐ Represents the department and university well, consistently giving courteous, knowledgeable and thorough service. Communicates clearly and appropriately. Effectively deals with difficult customers or with the delivery of a difficult message.
- ☐ Positive and supportive of department mission. Gives accurate information. Exhibits patience with customers.
- ☐ Does not convey a positive image of the department or university. May be impersonal or perfunctory in dealings with the public. May give confusing or inaccurate information (Narrative comment required - give examples).
- ☐ Other (please specify below).

Narrative Comments:

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Productivity

Consider quality (accuracy/appearance) and quantity of work and use of work time.

- ☐ Extraordinary volume of work completed with exceptional quality. Looks for ways to improve productivity of position, unit and department.
- ☐ Organized and in control of tasks. Consistently completes a high volume of work in a timely and accurate manner.
- ☐ Knows status of tasks. Meets deadlines, and standards for accuracy and quantity. Makes efficient use of time.
- ☐ Sometimes loses track of process or tasks. Needs to improve quantity and/or quality of work.
- ☐ Work is of unacceptable quality and/or quantity and much must be redone. Requires continuous help in completing assignments (Narrative comment required - give examples).
- ☐ Other (please specify below).

Narrative Comments:

Cooperation

Consider effectiveness of work relationships with supervisor, co-workers and others.

- ☐ Responds with enthusiasm to challenge and responsibility. Sees beyond own tasks to help fulfill the mission of the department. Responds positively to supervisor and others in the work environment.
- ☐ Maintains courteous and cooperative relationships with supervisor and co-workers. Accepts supervision, change and feedback.
- ☐ Has occasional difficulty working with supervisor, co-workers and/or accepting constructive criticism.
- ☐ Resists direction. Does not cooperate in accomplishing tasks or giving necessary information to others. Is, at times, disruptive (Narrative comment required - give examples).
- ☐ Other (please specify below).

Narrative Comments:

Safety

Consider employee's awareness of and efforts to maintain a healthy and safe working environment.

- ☐ Actively promotes safety in the workplace. Works in compliance with federal, state, university and department safety rules. Makes full use of safeguards, and does not use defective tools or equipment.

Identifies and helps prevent potential work hazards and advises co-workers and the public of unsafe conditions or behavior. Reports unsafe conditions to supervisor and/or appropriate university personnel.

☐ Based on training received, completes work in accordance with federal, state, and university safety rules. Maintains proper care of tools and equipment. Reports work hazards and/or unsafe conditions to supervisor and/or appropriate university personnel.

☐ Works or displays behavior that is not in compliance with federal, state, university or department safety rules. Does not make full use of safeguards and/or uses defective tools or equipment. Fails to identify known or suspected work hazards and/or fails to report unsafe conditions or behavior to supervisor and/or appropriate university personnel (Narrative comment required - give examples).

☐ Other (please specify below).

Narrative Comments:

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Employee Development

Identify and evaluate the results of employee development experiences during the last appraisal period:

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Identify development goals for employee and how they will be achieved during the next evaluation period:

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Appendix B
Modified Performance Appraisal

**Mt. Holly Board of Education
Custodian Evaluation Form**

Employee:

Title:

School:

Reporting Period:

Responsibilities	Proficient	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
GENERAL CLEANING				
Cleaning floors in halls, lavatories and classrooms				
Cleaning water fountains				
Cleaning lavatories including toilets, urinals, sinks				
Cleaning all mirrors and glass				
Cleaning walls and partitions				
Refilling soap dispensers and paper products				
Cleaning windows				
Dusting door frames, chalkboard ledges and picture frames, etc.				
Cleaning uni-vent filters				
Cleaning desks				

Responsibilities	Proficient	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
BEHAVIORAL FACTORS				
Adaptability				
Attitude				
Judgement				
Initiative				
Responsibility				
Cooperation				
Attendance & Punctuality				
Safety				
Teamwork				
Proper Attire				

EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

Performance areas of strength:

Performance areas to be addressed and suggested remedies:

Supervisor Signature: _____

Date: _____

I have reviewed and understand the above constructive criticism (if any). I understand that my signature is only an acknowledgement of receipt of this evaluation.

Employee Signature; _____

Date: _____

I have reviewed the above and disagree with the criticism for the following reasons:

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Biographical Data

Name	Roseanne Donnelly
High School	Haddon Heights High School Haddon Heights, NJ
Undergraduate	Bachelor of Arts English/Communications Cabrini College Radnor, PA
Graduate	Master of Arts School Business Administration Rowan University Glassboro, NJ
Present Occupation	Accountant Amerihealth Insurance Co. Mt. Laurel, NJ